

What is claimed is:

1. A system for designing a customized artistic element package to be applied to a vehicle comprising:

5 computer apparatus including memory for storing a plurality of initial artistic element representations and at least one representation of a vehicle;

input apparatus coupled to said computer apparatus for permitting one or more of said initial artistic element representations to be selected for placement on said vehicle representation;

10 at least one monitor coupled to said computer apparatus for displaying said selected one or more initial artistic element representations placed on said vehicle representation; and

15 said input apparatus further permitting one or more final artistic element representations to be designed with input from a person using said selected one or more initial artistic element representations, said one or more final artistic element representations defining a customized artistic element package.

20 2. A system as set forth in claim 1, wherein said computer apparatus stores a plurality of vehicle representations in said memory such that a desired one of said vehicle representations may be selected via said input apparatus for viewing on said monitor.

25 3. A system as set forth in claim 1, wherein said input apparatus is capable of generating appropriate command signals to said computer apparatus to permit one of said selected one or more initial artistic element representations to be moved from a first location to a second location on said vehicle representation.

30 4. A system as set forth in claim 1, wherein said input apparatus is capable of generating appropriate command signals to said computer apparatus to permit one of said one or more initial artistic element representations to be rotated on said vehicle representation.

5. A system as set forth in claim 1, wherein said input apparatus is capable of generating appropriate command signals to said computer apparatus to permit at least one of the size and shape of at least one of said selected one or more initial artistic element representations to be modified.

6. A system as set forth in claim 1, wherein said plurality of initial artistic element representations comprise a plurality of representations of one or more of dimensional graphics and flat graphics.

7. A system as set forth in claim 1, wherein said input apparatus additionally permits an order for said artistic element package to be generated and said computer apparatus electronically transmits print file and purchaser identification information for said order to an artistic elements manufacturer.

8. A system as set forth in claim 7, wherein said input apparatus is capable of generating appropriate command signals to said computer apparatus to input a request for pricing information for said package prior to generating said order.

9. A system as set forth in claim 7, wherein said input apparatus further permits a vehicle identification number and a dealer identification number to be input into said computer apparatus, said vehicle and dealer identification numbers defining said purchaser identification information.

10. A system as set forth in claim 1, wherein said one or more final artistic element representations comprise said one or more initial artistic element representations placed at one or more predefined locations on said vehicle, said initial artistic element representations being located at said one or more predefined locations on said vehicle when initially selected and placed on said vehicle representation.

11. A system for designing and manufacturing a customized artistic element package to be applied to a vehicle comprising:

computer apparatus including memory for storing a plurality of initial artistic element representations and at least one representation of a vehicle;

input apparatus coupled to said computer apparatus for permitting one or more of said initial artistic element representations to be selected for placement on said vehicle representation, said input apparatus further permitting a customized artistic element package to be designed using said selected one or more initial artistic element representations, and additionally permitting an electronic order for said package to be generated;

at least one monitor coupled to said computer apparatus for displaying said selected one or more initial artistic element representations placed on said vehicle representation; and

apparatus for producing said order.

12. A system as set forth in claim 11, wherein said computer apparatus comprises:

an operator computer provided with a browser and being coupled to said input apparatus and said monitor, said customized artistic element package being designed using said operator computer; and

a server computer system including memory for storing web site information including said plurality of initial artistic element representations and said at least one vehicle representation, said server system being capable of downloading said web site information to said operator computer for viewing by an operator at said monitor, and said operator computer being capable of sending print file information for said order to said server computer system.

13. A system as set forth in claim 12, wherein said operator computer is capable of receiving one or more customer-generated print files and transmitting said one or more customer-generated print files to said server system.

14. A system as set forth in claim 12, wherein said operator computer is located at one of a vehicle dealership, an after-market detailer, and the residence of an individual purchaser.

15. A system as set forth in claim 12, wherein said computer apparatus further comprises an artistic elements manufacturer computer system which is capable of being interconnected with said server system, said server system sending said print file information for said order to said artistic elements manufacturer computer system after receiving said print file information from said operator computer.

16. A system as set forth in claim 15, wherein said artistic elements manufacturer computer system comprises:

a file server including memory storing a plurality of high resolution print files, said file server receiving said print file information from said server system, said print file information identifying one or more of said high resolution print files which correspond to one or more final artistic element representations defining said customized package, said file server retrieving said one or more corresponding high resolution print files;

a raster image processor receiving said one or more high resolution print files from said file server and converting said one or more high resolution print files into one or more bit-mapped images; and

a printer processor coupled to a printer, receiving said one or more bit-mapped images from said raster image processor and generating print commands to said printer to effect printing of said one or more bit-mapped images on a base substrate layer.

17. A system as set forth in claim 16, wherein said artistic elements manufacturer computer system further includes a disk array coupled to said printer processor for receiving and storing sufficient bit-mapped image data so as to permit said printer to print continuously a plurality of said bit-mapped images on said base substrate layer.

18. A system as set forth in claim 17, wherein said disk array stores sufficient bit-mapped image data so as to permit said printer to print continuously a plurality of said bit-mapped images on at least 23,000 inches of said base substrate layer.

19. A system as set forth in claim 12, wherein said computer apparatus further comprises a vehicle manufacturer computer system which is capable of being interconnected with said server system, said server system sending purchaser information for said order to said vehicle manufacturer computer system after receiving said order from said operator computer.

20. A system as set forth in claim 19, wherein said operator computer being capable of sending a vehicle identification number and a dealer identification number to said server system, said vehicle and dealer identification numbers defining said purchaser information.

21. A system as set forth in claim 11, wherein said computer apparatus comprises a workstation computer coupled to said input apparatus and said monitor, said workstation computer including said memory for storing said plurality of representations of initial artistic elements and said at least one representation of a vehicle.

22. A system as set forth in claim 11, wherein said computer apparatus is capable of receiving one or more customer-generated print files.

23. A system as set forth in claim 22, wherein said one or more customer-generated print files comprise one or more high-resolution print files.

24. A system as set forth in claim 22, wherein said one or more customer-generated print files are transmitted to said computer apparatus from a customer computer system.

25. A system as set forth in claim 11, further including a base substrate layer having on a first side one or more printed graphics corresponding to each of one or more final artistic element representations defining said customized package, said first side defining a first printed surface, and wherein said apparatus for producing said order comprises:

apparatus for applying a protective layer on said first printed surface of said printed base substrate layer to produce a graphic substrate; and

apparatus for cutting said graphic substrate to separate one or more finalized artistic elements from a remaining portion of said graphic substrate, said one or more separated, finalized elements comprising one or more flat graphics.

26. A system as set forth in claim 25, wherein said base substrate layer has an adhesive back surface and said apparatus for producing said order further comprises:

apparatus for applying a release liner over said adhesive back surface of said base substrate layer;

apparatus for applying a controlled adhesion product over said protective layer; and

apparatus for removing the remaining portion of said graphic substrate from said one or more finalized elements.

27. A system as set forth in claim 25, wherein said apparatus for cutting can automatically cut said graphic substrate into a desired pattern.

28. A system as set forth in claim 25, further comprising a printing apparatus for printing said graphics on said base substrate layer, said printing apparatus further printing registration indicia on said base substrate layer for each of said one or more finalized artistic elements and said apparatus for cutting automatically cuts said graphic substrate to separate one of said one or more finalized artistic elements from said remaining portion of said graphic substrate after locating and identifying said registration indicia for said one finalized artistic element.

29. A system as set forth in claim 25, wherein said cutting apparatus comprises:
a cutting bed adapted to receive said graphic substrate;
a cutter;
positioning apparatus for at least one of moving said cutter relative to said cutting bed, moving said cutting bed relative to said cutter, and moving said cutter and said cutting bed relative to each other; and

a cutter processor coupled to said positioning apparatus for providing movement commands to said positioning apparatus to effect the cutting of said graphic substrate to separate said one or more finalized artistic elements from said remaining portion of said graphic substrate.

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30. A system as set forth in claim 25, wherein said apparatus for applying a protective layer on said first printed surface of said printed base substrate layer to produce said graphic substrate comprises one of spray-line apparatus in a substantially clean environment, screen-printing apparatus and apparatus for applying a substantially clear film for protection of said printed base substrate layer.

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31. A process for generating an order for a customized artistic element package to be applied to a vehicle comprising:

creating a database of a plurality of initial artistic element representations and at least one representation of a vehicle;

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selecting one or more of the initial artistic element representations for placement at one or more locations on the vehicle representation;

displaying on at least one monitor the selected one or more initial artistic element representations placed on the vehicle representation;

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designing interactively with a person a customized artistic element package using the selected one or more initial artistic element representations; and

generating an order for the artistic element package.

32. A process as set forth in claim 31, further comprising the steps of:

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creating a data base of a plurality of vehicle representations; and

selecting one of the vehicle representations for receiving the one or more initial artistic element representations.

33. A process as set forth in claim 32, wherein said designing step comprises moving one of the one or more selected initial artistic element representations to another location on the selected vehicle representation.

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34. A process as set forth in claim 31, wherein said designing step comprises rotating one of the one or more selected initial artistic element representations.

35. A process as set forth in claim 31, wherein said designing step comprises modifying the size of one of the one or more selected initial artistic element representations.

36. A process as set forth in claim 31, wherein said designing step comprises modifying the shape of one of the one or more selected initial artistic element representations.

37. A process as set forth in claim 31, wherein said designing step comprises clipping one of the one or more selected initial artistic element representations.

38. A process as set forth in claim 31, wherein the order is electronically transmitted to an artistic elements manufacturer.

39. A process as set forth in claim 38, wherein the transmitted order comprises print file information for one or more final artistic element representations defining said customized artistic element package and including information regarding placement of the one or more finalized artistic elements on the vehicle, and optionally, one or more scale factors, and purchaser identification information including vehicle identification information and dealer identification information.

40. A process for designing and manufacturing a customized artistic element package to be applied to a vehicle comprising:

creating a database of a plurality of initial artistic element representations and at least one representation of a vehicle;

selecting one or more of the initial artistic element representations for placement at one or more locations on the vehicle representation;

displaying on at least one monitor the selected one or more initial artistic element representations placed on the vehicle representation;

designing interactively with a person a customized artistic element package
using the selected one or more initial artistic element representations;
generating an order for the artistic element package; and
producing the artistic element package.

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41. A process as set forth in claim 40, wherein said step of producing the
package comprises the steps of:

printing onto a first side of a base substrate layer graphical information for
each of one or more final artistic element representations defining the customized package
to produce a first printed surface;

applying a protective layer on the first printed surface of the base substrate
layer to produce a graphic substrate; and

cutting the graphic substrate to separate one or more finalized artistic
elements from a remaining portion of the graphic substrate, the one or more separated,
finalized elements comprising one or more flat graphics.

42. A process as set forth in claim 41, wherein the base substrate layer has an
adhesive back surface and said step of producing the package further comprises the steps
of:

applying a release liner over the adhesive back surface of the base substrate
layer; and,

applying a controlled adhesion product over the protective layer.

43. A process as set forth in claim 40, wherein the base substrate layer has a
releasable adhesive back surface which permits the one or more separated, finalized
elements to be easily removed after being applied to a vehicle.

44. A process as set forth in claim 40, wherein the order is generated and the
artistic element package is produced within five days.

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45. A process as set forth in claim 40, wherein the order comprises print file information and purchaser identification information including a vehicle identification number, the purchaser information being used for identifying and tracking the order.

5 46. A process as set forth in claim 40, wherein the order is generated at one of a vehicle dealership, an after-market detailer, and the residence of an individual purchaser.

47. A process as set forth in claim 46, further comprising the step of forwarding the order to an artistic elements manufacturer.

10 48. A process as set forth in claim 47, wherein the order is generated at a vehicle dealership and further comprising the step of forwarding the order for the artistic element package to a vehicle manufacturer together with an order for a vehicle.

15 49. A process as set forth in claim 48, further comprising the step of shipping the produced artistic element package from the artistic elements manufacturer to the vehicle manufacturer for application of the produced package to the ordered vehicle at the vehicle manufacturer.

20 50. A process as set forth in claim 48, further comprising the steps of:
shipping the produced artistic element package to the vehicle manufacturer; and
shipping the ordered vehicle with the produced artistic element package to the dealership such that the artistic element package can be applied to the ordered vehicle at the dealership.

25 51. A process as set forth in claim 48, further comprising the step of shipping the produced artistic element package to the dealership for application of the ordered package to the ordered vehicle at the dealership.

30 52. A process as set forth in claim 48, further comprising the step of making payment for the order to one of the dealership and the artistic elements manufacturer.

53. A process as set forth in claim 52, wherein when the payment is made to the dealership the payment is made at one of the time when the vehicle is ordered and received.

5 54. A process as set forth in claim 46, further comprising the step of shipping the produced artistic element package to the location where the order was generated.

55. A process as set forth in claim 54, further comprising the step of making payment for the order at one of the time when the order is generated and when the shipped package is received at the location where the order was generated.

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56. A process as set forth in claim 46, wherein the order is generated at one of a vehicle dealership and the residence of an individual purchaser and further comprising the step of forwarding the order to a vehicle manufacturer together with an order for a vehicle.

57. A process as set forth in claim 56, further comprising the step of forwarding the package order from the vehicle manufacturer to an artistic elements manufacturer.

58. A process as set forth in claim 57, further comprising the step of said vehicle manufacturer making payment for the package order directly to the artistic elements manufacturer.